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Louisiana Ethics Administration Program
P.O. Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

July 16, 2021

Board Members,

My name is Deirdre Fontenot. I am a Child Welfare Service Assistant with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, St. Mary Parish. While working as a CWSA, I have been compelled to do more to help children we serve in the surrounding parishes. I have decided to pursue my credentials to work in social work practice. I am currently enrolled at Walden University Bachelor of Social Work online studies in efforts to earn my social work degree. I will be reaching my degree goal within eight to twelve months.

While working in the St. Mary office, I realized that there are more foster children than foster homes. When children come into care during the removal process, the children are transported to our local offices. Most of the time families consist of multiple siblings. Added to the trauma the children are experiences they are.

- Afraid
- Confused
- Hungry
- Exhausted
- Cold

While in the office, caseworkers are frantically scrambling to find placement that can adequately accommodate multiple siblings. Unfortunately, with foster home placement shortages, siblings are separated and placed abroad. Locations can be several hours commute away causing visitation challenges.

My goal is to open a home that provides foster services for children whom come into care on a temporary basis. As an alternative of being placed in an child unfriendly environment that is already stressful, while the social worker diligently works, the children will be provided with a more calming and stable environment provided with;

- Hot meal
- Fully functioning bathing facility
- Entertainment stimulation
- Access to computers and gaming
- Warm Bed
- Safe environment

Serenity Place Foster Services, LLC will allow the social workers time to properly network potential homes that will be able to accommodate as many siblings in one home in efforts to keep the family together or in as close location to each other as possible. Because I am a Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services employee, I would like to ensure that I am looking out for the best interest of the children I intend to serve. My intentions are to provide as much care for children with multiple siblings and I want to do my due diligence to assure that I am avoiding all possible conflicts of interest because both my husband and I are current employees with the LA DCFS in St. Mary and St. Martin Parish.

I am asking for guidance in the right direction as I pursue my goal of being a foster homeowner. I was able to communicate with Mrs. LaToya Jordan who has provided me with great positive feedback on how I can develop safe haven to our youth population and still maintain my employment with LA DCFS. As of today's date, I have successfully accomplished the first steps in business ownership.

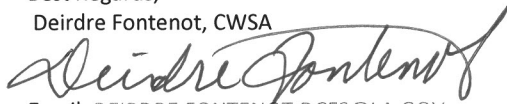
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- Business Name (Serenity Place Foster Services, LLC)
- EIN Number
- Registered (Louisiana Secretary of State)

Serenity Place Foster Services, LLC operated and managed by owner and partner Deirdre and Alex Fontenot. The Home is expected be fully staffed with certified CPR and Fire Safety Trained workers. Regularly scheduled evacuation fire drills and emergency preparedness plans of action is implemented. The Serenity Place home will have parameter video monitoring for safety with entrance and exits login routines for all visitors. In efforts to provide privacy and safety for the children in care, strict policies will be in place to secure the occupants and non-disclosures is enforced. To protect the overall health and safety of the children and staff, alcohol, tobacco, firearms safety policies is fully enforced. Serenity Place owners will be on call and available to act as an icebreaker and ensure a smooth transition for the children.

I am reaching out to the Louisiana Ethics Administration Advisory Board in efforts to help me with my journey of safely fostering children. I am submitting this request for your full support and or guidance in the right direction. I am asking if I can legally operate a fostering service without violating any ethics laws? Can I remain actively be employed with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services as a Child Welfare Service Assistant and future Social Worker?

Best Regards,
Deirdre Fontenot, CWSA



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Baton Rouge PS&C 708
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